

Message Text

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INFO RUTAOH/AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE 4701

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA FOR AMBASSADOR MCHENRY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 135919

FOLLOWING REPEAT HAVANA 1420 ACTION SECSTATE INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
BRUSSELS KINSHASA MOSCOW PARIS MAY 25.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 1420

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, MILI, CG, CU, FR, GE

SUBJECT: CUBANS ON SHABA

REF: HAVANA 1389

1. FRENCH AMBASSADOR, MAY 25, BRIEFED ACTING USINT CHIEF ON
HIS MAY 23 CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER MALMIERCA (REFTEL)
ON SHABA EVENTS. MALMIERCA STATED STRONGLY THAT CUBANS ARE NOT
INVOLVED WITH KATANGESE AND THAT HAVANA WANTS CRISIS TO END AS
QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. MALMIERCA ADDED THAT KATANGESE INCURSION
IS PARTICULARLY UNFORTUNATE AT TIME WHEN INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION
SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON RHODESIAN AND NAMIBIAN PROBLEMS. MALMIERCA
FURTHER SAID THAT WESTERN INTERVENTION HAS CLEARLY POINTED UP
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RISK OF "INTERNATIONALIZATION" OF SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION.

2. FRENCH AMBASSADOR STATED TO US THAT HE HAS SENSE THAT
LAST CUBAN HELP WAS GIVEN TO KATANGESE IN EARLY MONTHS OF
1977, BEFORE CASTRO'S TRIP THROUGH AFRICA. FRENCH AMBASSA-
DOR ADDED THAT CUBAN OFFICIALS HAD EXPRESSED ACUTE DIS-
APPOINTMENT TO HIM AFTER LAST YEAR'S SHABA INCURSION, DUE

TO CUBANS' PERCEIVED NEED TO HALT TROOP DRAWDOWNS AND REINFORCE THEIR PRESENCE IN ANGOLA. FRENCH AMBASSADOR BELIEVES THAT CURRENT SHABA SITUATION PRESENTS SIMILAR PROBLEM FURTHER DELAYING ANY CUBAN MILITARY DISENGAGEMENT FROM ANGOLA. (COMMENT: ANGOLAN FOREIGN MINISTER PAULO JORGE IS QUOTED IN JUVENTUD REBELDE, MAY 23, AS SAYING THAT SOUTH AFRICAN ATTACK ON CASSINGA MAKES IT "URGENT TO IMPROVE OUR DEFENSE MECHANISMS TO FACE NEW AGGRESSIONS" - A REQUIREMENT, PRESUMABLY HEIGHTENED BY POST-SHABA SITUATION, WHAT WILL PLACE CONTINUED MILITARY OBLIGATIONS ON CUBANS.)

3. FRENCH AMBASSADOR CONTINUED THAT, WHILE HE DOES NOT BELIEVE CUBANS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED RECENTLY, "IT IS POSSIBLE" THAT EAST GERMANS TRAINED KATANGESE AND EVEN LED THEM TO ANGOLAN BORDER ENROUTE TO KOLWEZI ATTACK. AMBASSADOR DID NOT SPECIFY SOURCE OF HIS INFORMATION.

4. COMMENT: USINT TENDS TO AGREE WITH FRENCH INTERPRETATION THAT EXPRESSED CUBAN DESIRE TO END SHABA CRISIS QUICKLY IS MOTIVATED AS MUCH AS DESIRE TO REDUCE PERCEIVED THREAT TO ANGOLA AS IT IS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ZAIRE REBELS IN ABSENCE OF WESTERN TROOPS. WE SENSE THAT CUBANS, IN WAKE OF CASSINGA AND SHABA, ARE NOW A BIT SCARED AND DISORIENTED. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS AFRICA DIRECTOR OSCAR ORAMAS, AN EXTREMIST ULTRA-REVOLUTIONARY DEFENDER OF CUBA'S AFRICAN PRESENCE AND FIRST CUBAN AMBASSADOR. CONFIDENTIAL

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DOR TO ANGOLA, REMARKED TO US, HALF JOocularly, MAY 25, THAT IF US PRESSED VORSTER TO ALTER SITUATIONS IN NAMIBIA AND RHODESIA, CUBANS WOULD "WASH THEIR HANDS" OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. GLASSMAN UNQUOTE VANCE

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